The Chinese Students' Committee on Washington Conference
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MANCHURIA IN THE CONFERENCE

During the discussion on the surrendering of leased territories by the foreign nations to China in the Committee on Pacific and Far Eastern Questions on Dec. 3, the Japanese delegate Hanihara took exception to two important leased territories held by Japan in Manchuria, namely Port Arthur and Talienwan (variously spelled as Dairen or Dalny) in South Manchuria. He made the following statement:

> "As to that territory, the Japanese delegates wish to make it clear that Japan has no intention at present to relinquish the important rights she lawfully acquired and at no small sacrifice. The territory in question forms a part of Manchuria, a region where, by reason of its close proximity to Japan's territory more than anything else, she has vital interests in that which relates to her economic life and national safety.
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> "This fact was recognized and assurance was given by the American, British, and French Governments at the time of the formation of the international consortium that these vital interests of Japan in the region in question shall be safeguarded."

But these vital interests are not recognized by other nations. Dr. Paul S. Reinsch, formerly American Minister to China, made this statement:

> "In fact, the consortium never recognized Japan's vital interest in Manchuria, as stated by Mr. Hanihara. The use of the words 'vital interest' in Manchuria would imply very much more than 'special interest,' which the consortium actually recognized.
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> "The situation is that the three Governments never did recognize Japan's vital interests in Manchuria, because the consortium, consisting of America, Great Britain and France, refused to recognize Japan's claim for vital inter-

ests. In fact, the consortium did agree that no loans should be used in Manchuria which might affect the sovereignty of Japan. They were quite distinctly averse to recognizing a special position of Japan in Manchuria.

"In view of the known facts, it is surprising that this statement should be made."

Port Arthur and Talienwan and other interests in Manchuria are more vital to China than to Japan. They concern China's national safety and economic life more than they do Japan's. Port Arthur and Talienwan were originally leased to Russia by the treaty of March 27, 1898, with the specific stipulation that "The term of lease is fixed at twenty-five years from the date of signature." After Japan had violated China's neutrality and committed great devastation on Chinese soil in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan, on Dec. 22, 1905, made a treaty with China, regarding the transfer of the lease of these two territories and stipulated, "The Imperial Japanese Government engage that in regard to the leased territory as well as in the matter of railway construction and exploitation, they will, so far as circumstances permit, *conform to the original agreements concluded between China and Russia.*" Therefore the lease of Port Arthur and Talienwan will expire in 1923. Japan would contend that the period of lease was extended to 99 years by the treaty and notes growing out of the Twenty-one Demands of 1915. But aside from the iniquity of the Twenty-one Demands, which were forced on China without the least provocation on her part, **the treaty and the notes were never ratified by the Chinese Parliament and were no more binding on China than the Treaty of Versailles on the United States of America.** The Twenty-one Demands constitute an issue which ought to be brought up before the conference for settlement, as they are a menace to the peace of the Far East.

THE LANSING-ISHII AGREEMENT

Among the vital issues of the Far Eastern problems that ought to be brought up before the Washington Conference for discussion and disposition, the Lansing-Ishii Agreement of November 2, 1917, is certainly not to be forgotten or omitted. The essence of the agreement is as follows:

"The Governments of the United States and Japan recognize that territorial propinquity creates special relations between countries, and, consequently, the Government of the United States recognizes that **Japan has special interests in China,** particularly in the part to which her possessions are contiguous."

That it is within the scope of the Washington Conference to pass a judgment on this agreement is evident, *since it necessarily involves the negotiation of the principle of equality of nations as should be applied under the spacious sky of the Pacific and the Far East. This being so, it is a denial of a fundamental principle of international good relationship and, if left unremoved, cannot fail to breed ill-feeling and conflict.*

From a Chinese point of view Japan intends to arrogate to herself the power of interfering with China's freedom to accord equal treatment to all nations based on international law and justice. No country can claim to have any interests in China except those interests that are granted or recognized by China in treaty. The Lansing-Ishii Agreement is objectionable from another point of view. That agreement was concluded with reference to China without her consent, and is derogatory to her honor and prestige.

The repudiation of this agreement by the Conference is of the utmost importance to the future good understanding between China, United States and Japan. The term special interest has been variously interpreted by Japan to mean paramount interest or vital interest. The agreement is as of vital importance to America as well as to China. Recently an American writer of repute wrote on this agreement in the following manner:

"The Agreement was in effect a waiver of the 'open door' policy inaugurated by President McKinley and Secretary of State Hay, which open door policy has been consistently adhered to ever since except in the single instance of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement. In view of Secretary Hughes' recent strong declaration re-affirming the American policy of the open door in China, this Lansing-Ishii Agreement should be denounced and repudiated because of its being in conflict with the re-declaration of (the present) Administration of adherence to the open door policy which has been a fundamental principle of the Republican Party since it was enunciated.

"The Lansing-Ishii Agreement should be repudiated and denounced because Japan has falsely translated it and made unfair use of it. The Japanese Imperial Government has caused the agreement to be translated into Japanese, Chinese and Korean, translating the word 'special' as being 'paramount' and 'supreme' and has attempted to make the Chinese Government and the Chinese people, the Korean people, and their own native Japanese population, believe that by this Agreement the Government of the United States had accepted and confirmed the Japanese claims of a 'paramount' position in China and on the Asiatic Continent.

"That the Imperial Japanese Government well knew and knows that the Government of the United States never agreed to regard Japan's position in China and on the Asiatic Mainland as being paramount, and that it has falsely represented to the Government and peoples of the Far East, the language, content and purport of the agreement, with the purpose not only of enhancing its own prestige but particularly of destroying the position, influence and prestige of the Government of the United States in China and other parts of the Far East. The effects of these false representations of the meaning and purport of the agreement can not be cured by attempting to circulate a true statement of the meaning, language and purport of the agreement, and in view of the false representations made in connection therewith by the Imperial Government of Japan and the unfair and dishonorable use made of it thereby to lower the prestige and to destroy the influence and position of the Government of the United States, the agreement should be denounced and repudiated without delay."

The real motive of concluding the agreement on the part of United States has remained a mystery. The whole fallacy lies in the claim of Japan to special interest on ground of geographical propinquity. If this is true, then every country must have 'special interests' in as many nations as they are situated in its vicinity, and Canada or Mexico must have 'special interests' in the United States. And nothing would be more preposterous, if Canada or Mexico should maintain that they have paramount interests in the United States. For the interest of the peace in the Far East the Lansing-Ishii should be formally declared null and void by the Washington Conference.